



## **Rankings aside, Oz are still the top dogs**

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The Champions League has begun and the focus has now moved to the latest version of the game. Coming on the heels of the ICC Champions Trophy which was a 50 overs a side format, the comparisons will be made as to which holds viewer and spectator attention. The Champions League sounds similar to the Champions Trophy and can cause some confusion in the uninitiated and people will be hoping that next time around there won't be back to back events so that they will know which is a fifty overs game and which is a T20 format.

The ICC Champions Trophy showed just why, no matter the rankings, Australia is still top dog in the game. They may have lost the Ashes to England but they exacted revenge quickly enough by beating them comprehensively in the limited overs one-day series immediately after that and then went on to beat them comfortably in the semi-finals of the Champions Trophy to emphasise that the Ashes loss may have been a fluke after all. England missed Flintoff and Pietersen for sure and they just could not get off to the kind of start that is so essential in one-day cricket and that put too much pressure on those following. These players were all playing for their places in the team and so had dual pressures and with the exception of Paul Collingwood nobody did himself any favours with the bat.

On the other hand Shane Watson who fought his way back into the team as an opening batsman in both Tests and one day internationals consolidated it with back to back centuries in the semi-finals against England and then in the finals too. Ricky Ponting too enhanced his reputation as the world's premier batsman by scoring at will and even though he failed in the finals he had contributed by getting a run-out when New Zealand were settling down after early shocks. He more than anybody else had a lot riding on the Champions Trophy for if Australia had not defended its crown then he would have had a lot to answer back home. He led from the front and looked in total control and it would have pleased him no end to find that youngsters like Shane Watson, Nathan Hauritz and Cameron White took the responsibility and got the team home to another trophy.

Shane Watson for his Man of the Match deeds in the semis and finals is this week's CEAT International Cricketer.